DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 457 CE 006 750

AUTHOR O'Neil, Sharon Lund
TITLE Occupational Survival Skills Implications for Job Maintenance and Mobility. A Research Study Summary.
SPONS AGENCY Illinois State Office of Education, Springfield. Div. of Vocational and Technical Education.
PUB DATE May 76
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 21, 1976); For the full dissertation, see CE 006 840

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Decision Making; *Employee Attitudes; Employee Responsibility; *Employment Qualifications; Interpersonal Competence; *Job Satisfaction; *Job Skills; Occupational Information; Occupational Surveys; Participant Characteristics; Performance Criteria; Problem Solving; *State Surveys; Tables (Data); Work Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Illinois

ABSTRACT

A research study summary based on a dissertation entitled "Worker Perceptions Of Skills Necessary For Survival in the World of Work" is presented. A list of 27 basic occupational survival skills was developed representing the following areas: interpersonal relations and communications; personal characteristics; decision making and problem solving; and job characteristics, health, and safety. A telephone survey instrument, utilizing these 27 basic survival skills plus job attitude and demographic questions, was pilot-tested and then used for interviewing 589 workers throughout the State of Illinois. Responses were grouped into nine occupational classifications and analyzed. The following skills appeared to be important for occupational survival regardless of occupational classification: being dependable, giving an honest day's work, knowing what is expected of you, maintaining good health, and managing time and materials efficiently. Priority differences in the types of survival skills needed in specific occupations are also examined. Most workers indicated salary, security, or work satisfaction as reasons for keeping a job. Interpersonal relations was most often cited as a job aspect that was disliked. Tables indicating response by occupational classification and by occupational survival skill are presented. (LH)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

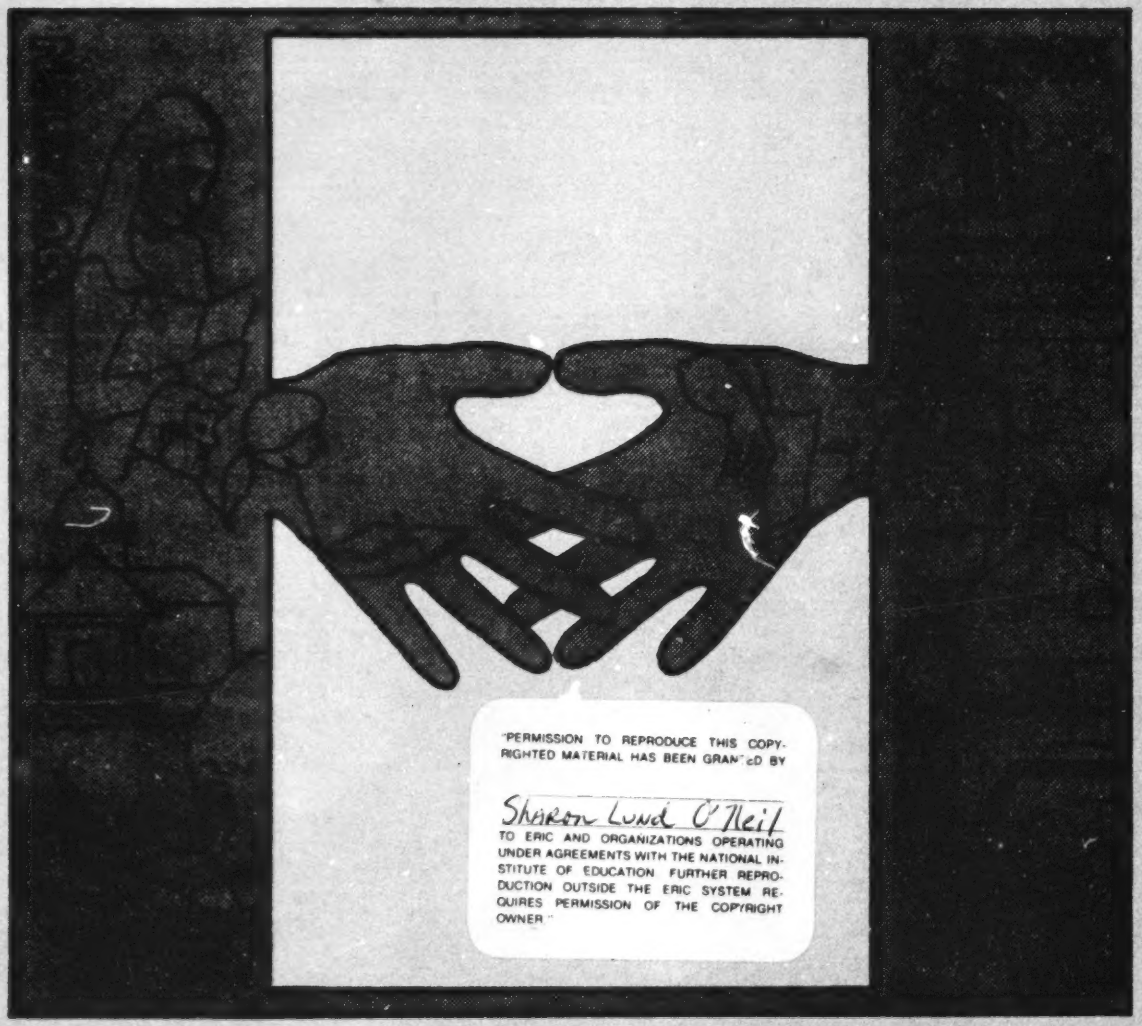
ED120457

Occupational Survival Skills

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOB MAINTENANCE AND MOBILITY

a research study summary by

Sharon Lund O'Neil



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sharon Lund O'Neil

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

Department of Vocational and Technical Education University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

CE008750

"OCCUPATIONAL SURVIVAL SKILLS"

IMPLICATIONS FOR JOB MAINTENANCE AND MOBILITY

A Research Study Summary by

SHARON LUND O'NEIL*

The present research study was conducted to identify occupational survival skills--the basic knowledges, traits and competencies necessary for an individual to possess in order to maintain a job. Occupational survival skills should permit workers not only to successfully maintain their chosen occupations, but also to move from occupation to occupation with a minimum of retraining.

A tentative listing of over 500 occupational survival skills was identified through the following procedures: an extensive review of related literature; interviews with a variety of workers; consultations with manpower personnel, research authorities, vocational and technical research and development personnel at the state level, vocational educators and others; and, input from numerous students, university faculty and staff and other workers. More than 300 persons, including a panel of education experts who validated the survey instrument, reduced this list of over 500 skills to 27 basic occupational survival skills. These skills appeared to

---

*This summary was based on a dissertation entitled, WORKER PERCEPTIONS OF SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL IN THE WORLD OF WORK (May, 1976) by Sharon Lund O'Neil, Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, 61801. This study was the primary investigation of the Occupational Survival Skills Project directed by and funded to Dr. Robert E. Nelson, Chairperson, Division of Business Education, University of Illinois, by a grant appropriated from the Division of Vocational and Technical Education, State of Illinois, Springfield, Illinois (1974-75).

be representative of the following areas: a) interpersonal relations and communications, b) personal characteristics, c) decision making and problem solving and d) job characteristics, health and safety.

A telephone survey instrument was developed with 41 items--the 27 occupational survival skill statements to be rated by respondents as to importance in keeping their jobs, 3 open-ended questions concerning respondents' attitudes toward their jobs and 11 questions relating to demographic data. A pilot test was conducted to a) refine the survey instrument, b) estimate the percentage of response and c) identify objectives for interviewer training sessions. Fifteen persons were trained to conduct the telephone survey; and, within a two-week period, 589 telephone interviews were completed.

The 589 workers interviewed were grouped according to occupations into the 9 occupational classifications used by the State of Illinois, Bureau of the Budget (an adaptation of the U.S. Bureau of the Census classification system). Frequencies and standard scores were obtained. Discriminant analysis was used in determining differences of the variables within and among the nine occupational classifications.

Each of the 27 occupational survival skills rated by respondents in each of the 9 occupational groups can be considered to have some degree of importance for occupational survival. Priority differences, however, were found in the types of survival skills needed by persons in specific occupational groups. The following skills appeared to be extremely important for occupational survival regardless of occupational classification: 1) being dependable, 2) giving an honest day's work, 3) knowing what is expected of you, 4) maintaining good health and 5) managing time and materials

efficiently. Aside from these five extremely important skills, twelve additional skills were identified by the total sample (regardless of occupational classification) as being important for occupational survival: 1) getting along with people with a variety of personalities, 2) working as a team member, 3) understanding written information, 4) having basic writing skills, 5) knowing your own abilities, strengths and weaknesses, 6) being loyal to the organization for which you work, 7) making independent decisions, 8) using initiative and imagination, 9) locating information, materials or equipment, 10) working without close supervision, 11) working under tension or pressure and 12) adjusting to various work situations. The remaining ten skills were found to be characteristic of one or some combination of the nine occupational classifications.

White collar workers indicated neatness and cleanliness in appearance as well as speaking skills as especially important skills for maintaining a job. Blue collar workers considered a) following safety regulations, b) knowing how to use job materials, machines or tools and c) being punctual as extremely important skills for their occupational survival.

Managerial groups indicated that having some type of specialized training and organizing work activities of other people were the most important skills in keeping their jobs. Non-management persons, or subordinates, indicated that following instructions was their most important occupational survival skill.

Workers in the services occupational classification indicated that their most important survival skills were a) being neat and clean in appearance, b) having some type of specialized training and c) following safety regulations. The very small group of farmers and farm workers indicated

that having basic math skills and knowing about the operating procedures of their businesses were their most important job maintenance skills.

Of the 589 total respondents in the study, most workers indicated that they kept their jobs because of salary, security or work satisfaction. No one primary reason was given for disliking their jobs. Interpersonal relations, however, was the reason cited most often by workers who did find an aspect of their jobs they disliked. The majority of respondents who had held previous jobs indicated that some important personal reason was the primary factor as to why they left their last jobs.

Based on the results of the present study, curriculum materials will be developed which will assist in preparing workers for successful job maintenance. The implications of job survival skill training may provide workers with more freedom of occupational mobility whereby they may obtain greater satisfaction and a higher sense of achievement from their jobs.

Responses by Occupational Classification and the Total Work Force in Illinois*

Group Number	Occupational Classification	Number of Respondents	Percent of Total Sample	Percent in Work Force
1	Professional, Technical, Kindred	108	18.34	14.53
2	Managers, Officials, Proprietors	64	10.87	8.23
3	Sales Workers	46	7.81	7.71
4	Clerical Workers	148	25.13	20.09
5	Craftsmen, Foremen, Kindred	74	12.56	13.84
6	Operatives	70	11.88	16.79
7	Service Workers	52	8.83	12.90
8	Laborers, except Farm	17	2.88	3.86
9	Farmers and Farm Workers	10	1.70	2.05
	Total	589	100.00	100.00

*1970 Census (State of Illinois, Bureau of the Budget, 1974).

Total Responses for 27 Occupational Survival Skills

	Occupational Survival Skill	Number and Percent of Total Respondents									
		VERY IMPORTANT		IMPORTANT		SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		NOT IMPORTANT		DOES NOT APPLY	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
X_1	be punctual	312	52.97	159	27.00	65	11.04	28	4.75	25	4.24
X_2	be dependable	485	82.34	87	14.77	10	1.70	4	.68	3	.51
X_3	get along with people with a variety of personalities	340	57.72	141	23.94	67	11.38	33	5.60	8	1.36
X_4	work as a team member	291	49.40	157	26.66	54	9.17	57	9.68	30	5.09
X_5	organize work activites of other people	174	29.54	114	19.36	82	13.92	90	15.28	129	21.90
X_6	understand written information	363	61.63	143	24.28	34	5.77	31	5.26	18	3.06
X_7	have basic writing skills	220	37.35	157	26.66	92	15.62	86	14.60	34	5.77
X_8	have basic speaking skills	252	42.78	171	29.03	83	14.09	66	11.21	17	2.89
X_9	be neat and clean in appearance	267	45.33	154	26.15	80	13.58	65	11.04	23	3.90
X_{10}	maintain good health	296	50.25	210	35.65	61	10.36	15	2.55	7	1.19
X_{11}	know your own abilities, strengths and weaknesses	296	50.25	215	36.50	53	9.00	17	2.89	8	1.36
X_{12}	give an honest day's work	336	57.04	198	33.62	37	6.28	13	2.21	5	.85
X_{13}	be loyal to the organization for which you work	286	48.56	168	28.52	77	13.07	34	5.77	24	4.08
X_{14}	make independent decisions	248	42.10	199	33.79	64	10.87	55	9.34	23	3.90
X_{15}	use initiative and imagination	248	42.10	199	33.79	65	11.04	54	9.17	23	3.90
X_{16}	know what is expected of you	301	51.10	235	39.90	38	6.45	10	1.70	5	.85
X_{17}	have basic arithmetic skills	254	43.13	128	21.73	95	16.13	79	13.41	33	5.60
X_{18}	know how to use job materials, machines or tools	282	47.88	138	23.43	64	10.87	56	9.50	49	8.32
X_{19}	locate information, materials or equipment	276	46.86	187	31.75	55	9.34	39	6.62	32	5.43
X_{20}	have some type of specialized training	244	41.43	159	27.00	70	11.88	93	15.79	23	3.90
X_{21}	have a basic knowledge of your organization's operating procedures	239	40.58	190	32.26	76	12.90	63	10.69	21	3.57
X_{22}	follow instructions	342	58.06	183	31.07	28	4.75	15	2.55	21	3.57
X_{23}	work without close supervision	306	51.95	180	30.56	34	5.77	45	7.64	24	4.08
X_{24}	work under tension or pressure	287	48.73	153	25.97	57	9.68	65	11.04	27	4.58
X_{25}	adjust to various work situations	284	48.22	207	35.14	51	8.66	24	4.08	23	3.90
X_{26}	manage time and materials efficiently	314	53.31	203	34.46	39	6.62	24	4.08	9	1.53
X_{27}	follow safety regulations	285	48.39	134	22.75	63	10.69	42	7.13	65	11.04